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DECORATION & FURNITURE

THE ART POSSIBILITIES OF STOVES.



WITH the fall of the leaf and approaching winter we utter our annual protest against the hideousness of the American stove, and implore some manufacturer with a sense of his country's shame to come to the rescue and give us something better. As last year we accompanied our wail with pictures of two old-time European stoves of artistic design, to remind him that there is no necessity for inflicting upon us the conventional cast-iron abomination, so we select for the present notice a classical and beautiful model for his study and emulation.

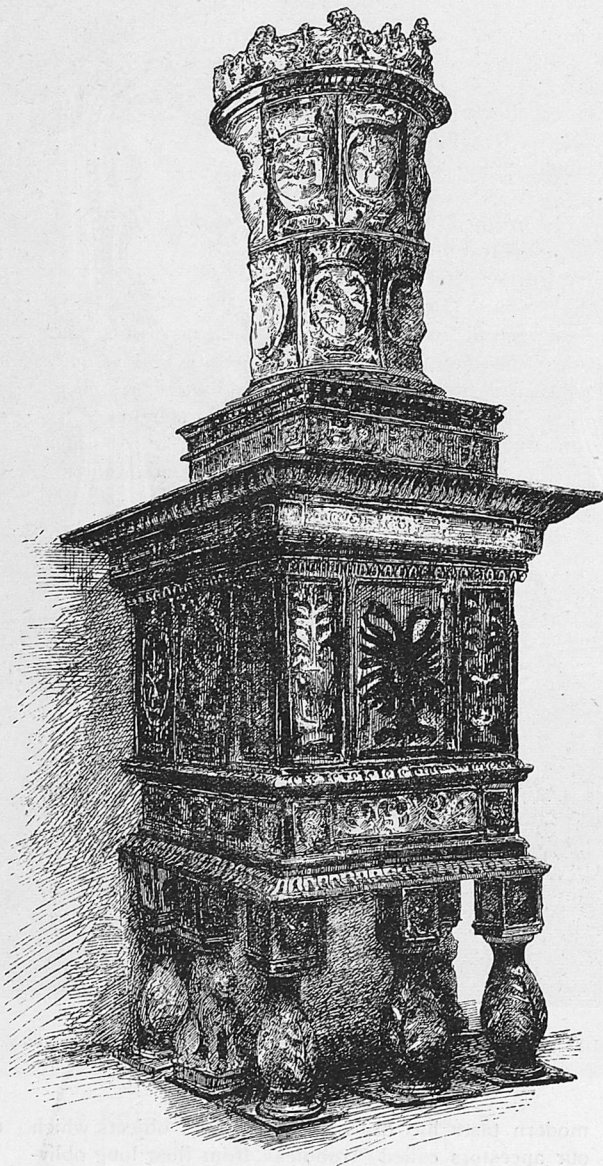
The original of our illustration is in the Nuremberg Museum. The design, it will be observed, is not opposed to the construction of some of the American stoves of to-day. But how unlike them in its graceful outline and beauty of decoration! Notwithstanding the apparent hopelessness of the situation, we are still loath to believe that the art of making an inoffensive-looking heating apparatus has wholly left us. Of the early American cast-iron stoves, few were without some saving grace of form or proportion. But, as in many other departments of industry, our first efforts were our best. Later stoves burn less coal or wood; but the older ones gave more solid comfort and did not so distress the eye. Perhaps their time has gone by, never to be recalled; but if we must have stoves, and if the art of iron-casting has been hopelessly vulgarized, why cannot we take a hint from the sensible German custom of surrounding the ugly iron case with a covering of beautifully glazed tiles? We make such tiles, as good as are to be found in the world. We also make the most atrocious affairs in cast iron that can be seen on earth. Why not use the first to cover up the second? The German stove generally puts on some sort of architectural appearance, as in our model, and always makes a pleasant object in a room. It is to be hoped that while stoves still continue to be used among us, we will follow the example of the fatherland, and, like the tired artist in Richter's little drawing, toast our slippers against a moderately warm tile in a warm room, instead of roasting and shivering at once before some cast-iron monstrosity from the classic neighborhood of West Troy.

The key to the whole trouble, we believe, lies in the fact that the manufacturers for their designs are wholly dependent upon the pattern-makers. These wretched mechanics who have not the ghost of an original idea will doubtless go on perpetuating their abominations so long as their customers demand from them nothing better. In England, where the idea of the American stove has been lately adopted, we understand that decided improvements have already been made both in form and decorations. No less famous an artist than Mr. E. J. Poynter has not found it beneath his dignity to make designs for the manufacturers. Are not any of our own manufacturers enterprising enough to pay an artist a good price for an artistic model? Can it be that a year has rolled by again, and, entering upon another winter, we must still patiently submit to the disfigurement of our otherwise well-furnished rooms by the presence of the conven-

tional cast-iron horror which happily we have managed to conceal since last spring?

CONCERNING BOUDOIRS.

THE word boudoir, from the French "boudier," to sulk, shows the original purpose of boudoirs plainly enough. They were meant to be the especially and particularly private room of the lady whose bedroom they adjoined, where she might "boude" if she chose, or receive a few favored intimates of either sex, without offence to the conveniences, which forbade them her "chambre à coucher." Boudoirs are as French in their character as in their name, and are of scarcely earlier date than the eighteenth century, that airy and graceful century which came to such a tragic end.



GERMAN RENAISSANCE STOVE.
IN THE NUREMBERG MUSEUM.

Novelists of a certain class are very fond of making the mise-en-scene of their stories in boudoirs, regardless of the time of their starting or the place, but one can scarcely think of an Elizabethan heroine in a boudoir, or imagine a boudoir furnished with Jacobean oaks and Queen Anne brasses, without a sense of artistic unfitness worthy of Eastlake himself. Indeed, to be true to their name and origin, they should be small and gay, quite of the tiny, attar-of-rose-scented jewel-box order. Fragonard, Natoire and Clodion decorated little rooms, never more than fourteen feet by ten in size, that were the delight of Marie Antoinette and her court ladies of honor. Boudoirs have never been thoroughly naturalized in a foreign country, and remain still exotic to the domestic ways of our Anglo-Saxon race. American and English wives do not need a coquettish room as frame

for coquettish toilets in which to receive a ceremonious visit from the "mari," and so the American boudoir is more likely to become a sort of family room, or "morning room" as they call it in England, than to retain its original character.

Personal taste has more scope and range in a "sitting" or "morning" room than in a purely legitimate, and therefore eighteenth century and French boudoir. Nothing more classic than the most effeminate Renaissance art has any right in the latter, and the Venus di Milo would be as much out of place there as a mediæval crusader or the Farnese Bull! True modern taste has a cosmopolitan and comprehensive idea of combining and harmonizing the productions of various times in what is called the nineteenth century boudoir; but a glance at the room, its decorations and dimensions, shows it to be not really what it is called, but a very handsome and artistic drawing- or sitting-room.

In one I have in mind; the decorator has supplied a frieze of Lincrusta-Walton—white relief on sage-green ground. The dado consists of a leather paper of brown, with shaded figures. A walnut moulding separates the dado from the hanging, which is some textile stuff of Venetian-red, stretched smoothly upon the wall. The French windows are draped with Flemish tapestry and screens of Cordova leather stand before the doors. The table is of inlaid satin-wood of the Adam style now in such full English Renaissance. The chair is Queen Anne style, upholstered in a tapestry, harmonizing with the general tone of the room. One or two tables are covered with old Damascus embroidery. There is also a table of French marquetry with a base of gilded carving. A cabinet for books and knick-knacks and a writing-table are of satin-wood inlaid with dark woods, while the chimney-piece is of sombre oak carved in Renaissance patterns in low relief, the sides guarded by caryatides in form of Tudor terminals.

In ordinary English boudoirs nowadays Oriental decoration has its day quite as much as the Louis Quinze or Louis Seize styles. The rich stuffs, glowing like veiled carbuncles and topaz, or delicate with mystic hints of slumbering splendor, and the tarnished or brilliant metal work, have their devotees of all lengths of purse. A pretty Oriental boudoir, be it said, may be designed at much less expense than the dainty but costly affairs, all satin-wood, ormolu and porcelain, that are in the real boudoir style. Many an effective Oriental boudoir has scarcely any real furniture at all, being filled mostly with divans, tables and cushions which need only Eastern stuffs thrown over Occidental carpentry to seem as if bodily transported from Damascus, or from the palace of some Kohl-eyed princess of Hindostan.

One especially pretty room, of this style is one of the innumerable boudoirs of the Vanderweyde electric light studios on Regent Street. Mr. Vanderweyde himself is an artist, and it may be guessed that this modest little room several flights of stairs above its more costly and elaborate sister dressing-rooms, is a purely artistic whim of the owner and meant more for self-gratification than for the admiration of the common run of visitors. The walls of this bijou room are covered from ceiling to floor with Syrian curtains, fluted and arranged tent fashion from the centre of ceiling. These Syrian curtains are "Liberty stuffs," pale yellow with vertical bands of darker yellow, and cost only two or three shillings apiece. The windows are draped with the same stuff, with the difference that the bands of darker yellow run horizontally instead of vertically. The same drapery frames the mirrors, and festoons itself above the doors. Syrian rugs, amber and dusky red, cover the floor and invite one to rest upon the wide divans. Ostrich eggs—not Syrian by the way, but of such Oriental decorative character as makes them perfectly